

Senate Resolution 263

By: Senators Unterman of the 45th, Thomas of the 54th, Staton of the 18th, Hawkins of the 49th, Hill of the 32nd and others

ADOPTED SENATE**A RESOLUTION**

1 Recognizing the benefits of public health programs in Georgia's local communities; urging
2 the President and Congress of the United States to provide support to strengthen Georgia's
3 public health infrastructure; and for other purposes.

4 WHEREAS, "public health" is a proven, prevention-focused discipline keeping Georgians
5 healthy by working in local communities or with targeted populations; and

6 WHEREAS, Georgia's public health programs serve populations in all 159 Georgia counties;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, Georgia's public health infrastructure provides life-saving immunizations;
9 directs public health programs working to limit the spread of HIV, AIDS, and other sexually
10 transmitted diseases; and investigates, evaluates, and eliminates environmental conditions
11 harmful to citizens and visitors; and

12 WHEREAS, public health programs are instrumental in ensuring Georgia's children are
13 healthy by screening for metabolic diseases in infants to prevent long-term disability,
14 collaborating with schools to reduce obesity among school-aged children, and providing
15 nutrition education and outreach for pregnant women to decrease anemia and promote
16 healthy weight gain during pregnancy; and

17 WHEREAS, seniors in Georgia also greatly benefit from the state's public health
18 infrastructure, which provides dental treatment to those without access to dental services,
19 develops walking trails and wellness programs, and administers flu shots; and

20 WHEREAS, some examples of public health interventions that have improved health and
21 safety include the implementation of child safety restraints to reduce the rate of injuries and
22 deaths, legislative bans on smoking to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke, improvement

23 of immunization levels through tracking systems and community education, and required
24 inspections of wells and restaurants to reduce food-borne illnesses; and

25 WHEREAS, the United States spends more than \$2 trillion a year on health care (one-sixth
26 of our economy) with 95 percent of those dollars spent on "sick care" and less than 5 percent
27 on treating preventable conditions and illnesses; and

28 WHEREAS, public health funding for Georgia has decreased in recent years from \$96 to \$75
29 per person, and Georgia ranks 41st among the 50 states in health status rankings; and

30 WHEREAS, cutting preventive services at a time when Americans are forced to reduce their
31 health care coverage will negatively impact Georgia's population, especially those who find
32 it difficult to access medical services and may not choose to see a provider until they are very
33 ill; and

34 WHEREAS, Georgia's public health system provides preventive health services in rural
35 counties that have limited or no other health care providers; and

36 WHEREAS, a strong public health system in Georgia plays a critical role in emergency
37 preparedness, leads community efforts in preventing and planning for emergencies, and
38 stands ready to respond to a wide array of threats, natural disaster events, pandemics, and
39 biological and chemical terrorism; and

40 WHEREAS, members of this body work to continue our support for public health programs
41 in Georgia but assistance through federal funding is needed in the current economic climate.

42 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
43 hereby urge the President and Congress of the United States to create budget resolutions and
44 appropriations measures that restore the funding needed to strengthen our nation's public
45 health infrastructure and, in turn, increase access to public health services that protect the
46 health and safety of Georgians and prevent the spread of disease.

47 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
48 to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to President Barack Obama and each
49 member of the Georgia congressional delegation.